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HOW CAN THE THEATER CINC IMPROVE PEACETIME MARITIME FORCE
PROTECTION AGAINST THE TERRORIST THREAT?

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Abstract

With a national security strategy that emphasizes peacetime engagement and overseas presence, the recent terrorist attack against the USS Cole (DDG 67) raises concerns about the effectiveness of current peacetime maritime force protection policies, procedures and practices. The Department of Defense reexamined and improved its force protection program after the 1983 marine barracks attack and the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing. With the shift in terrorist targets to maritime units, a similar analysis of the Commander, U.S. Central Command (CINCCENT), and Commander, Naval Forces U.S. Central Command (NAVCENT) Force Protection programs yields recommendations on ways the Combatant Commander (CINC) can improve maritime force protection. Using the attack on the USS Cole as an illustrative example, the organizations, policies, procedures and practices of CINCCENT and NAVCENT are analyzed for deficiencies and disconnects. Also, the actual practices that were used throughout the chain of command in the case of the USS Cole are analyzed to determine if published guidance was followed. Four recommendations are provided based on the analysis. Treating the fight against terrorism as war, the four recommendations are formulated by applying principles of war and the four questions of operational art to the theater force protection and antiterrorism program. The Theater CINC can improve force protection for inport maritime vessels by applying select principles of war and the four questions of operational art to maritime force protection and peacetime engagement policies.

Introduction

The recent terrorist attack on the USS Cole (DDG 67) on October 12, 2000 raises concerns about the effectiveness of current maritime force protection policies, procedures and practices. Did the theater Commander-in-Chief (CINC) and his maritime component commander provide adequate guidance to assigned ships? Was the attack a failure in the force protection mechanism or a specific failure on the part of the ship and crew? Were the risks of refueling in Yemen weighed against the benefit of engagement? Would changes in policy and procedures or other areas by the CINC improve force protection for assigned ships? The Theater CINC can improve force protection for inport maritime vessels by applying select principles of war and the four questions of operational art to maritime force protection and peacetime engagement policies.

Background

At the end of the cold war, the United States shifted its National Security Strategy to "shaping the international security environment, responding to threats and crises, and preparing for an uncertain future."¹ Having military forces forward deployed conducting engagement activities during peacetime has been crucial to this strategy.

Through overseas presence and peacetime engagement activities such as defense cooperation, security assistance, and training and exercises with allies and friends, our Armed Forces help to deter aggression and coercion, build coalitions, promote regional stability and serve as role models for militaries in emerging democracies.²

Pursuant to this strategy the requirement for overseas naval presence and peacetime engagement will not change in the foreseeable future.

With overseas presence and peacetime military engagement being the focus of current and future national security strategy, protection of those forces against the pervasive threat of

terrorism becomes critical to theater combatant commanders (CINCs). "Every commander,...has the inherent responsibility for planning, resourcing, training, exercising and executing antiterrorism measures to provide for the security of the command."³ Any loss to terrorist action of military personnel or equipment directly impacts the ability of the theater CINC to conduct military engagement activities and forward presence, deter aggression, or respond rapidly to crises or conflicts.

From the 1983 attack on the marine barracks in Beirut to the recent Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia in 1996, land-based U.S. Armed Forces have been repeatedly targeted for terrorist attack. As a result of these successful attacks, established DOD Force Protection (FP) and Antiterrorism (AT) policies were reexamined and improved.

Following Khobar, the Department of Defense undertook a major effort to build AT/FP competency at all levels. AT/FP now is under the direction of a single office within the Joint Chiefs of Staff ("J-34")...In short, before Khobar, there was no single core group within the Defense Department with broad responsibility for force protection. Such an element – staffed with competent, motivated personnel – now exists. Force protection has been given much higher priority for funding, the formulation of policies and standards and technology development.⁴

The recent terrorist bombing of the USS Cole (DDG 67) on 12 October 2000 in Aden, Yemen, killing 17 and wounding 39 sailors identified a marked shift in terrorist targeting and uncovered deficiencies in the current force protection mechanism for in-port maritime vessels.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) defines Force Protection (FP) as a security program designed to protect

Service members, civilian employees, family members, facilities and equipment in all locations and situations, accomplished through planned and integrated application of combating terrorism, physical security, operations security, and personal protective services and supported by intelligence, counter intelligence, law enforcement and other security programs.⁵

One of the four parts of the program, combating terrorism, and more specifically antiterrorism (AT) has become the focus of DOD efforts to improve force protection. The antiterrorism program concept promulgated by the CJCS consists of two phases, proactive and reactive. "The proactive phase encompasses the planning, resourcing, preventive measures, preparation, awareness education, and training that take place before a terrorist incident."⁶ Planning includes threat analysis, and threat assessment, while preventive measures include operations security, personal security, and physical security.

Methodology

Using the terrorist attack on the USS Cole as an illustrative example, this paper will analyze the FP/AT organization, policies and procedures for the Commander in Chief, United States Central Command (CINCCENT), and Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT). The analysis will look for deficiencies in organization, policies or procedures of either echelon and to identify any inconsistencies between the two. A determination will be made on whether actual practices followed prescribed procedures. The decision to conduct engagement through refueling in Aden will be weighed against the risk of terrorist attack based on the four questions of operational art. The possibility of complacency being a factor will also be discussed. Viewing the fight against terrorism as war, recommendations will be offered by applying selected principles of war and the four questions of operational art to theater engagement and force protection practices.

Analysis

Force Protection Policy

Although the Department of State (DOS) is normally the lead agency for combating terrorism outside the continental United States, the Department of Defense (DOD) is responsible for protecting its own personnel, ships, bases and equipment. The DOD "has been established as the lead agent in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the DOS and Department of Defense on the security of the Arabian Peninsula."⁷ Based on these responsibilities, the DOD promulgated DOD Directive 0-2000.12, "DOD Combatting Terrorism Program" and DOD 0-2000.12-H "Protection of DOD Personnel and Activities against Acts of Terrorism and Political Turbulence." The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) followed with Joint Publication 3-07.2, "Joint Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Antiterrorism." Referencing the above documents, Commander in Chief, U.S. Central Command (CINCCENT) promulgated Commander, United States Central Command Operation Order 97-01, "Force Protection" (USCINCCENT OPORD 97-01). NAVCENT likewise issued, Commander, United States Naval Forces Central Command/Commander, Fifth Fleet Operation Order 99-01, "Force Protection" (COMUSNAVCENT / COMFIFTHFLT OPORD 99-01). These two operation orders, which set the specific policy, procedures and command structure for force protection and antiterrorism for Central Command forces, will be analyzed for deficiencies or disconnects.

USCINCCENT OPORD 97-01

Unlike any of the other unified commands, United States Central Command recognizes in USCINCCENT OPORD 97-01 its unique situation.

USCENTCOM, with no permanent headquarters in the AOR, is unique among Unified Commands. Management of force protection from our base(s) in CONUS, over 7000 miles away from the AOR, is a challenge. Exacerbating the effort is the complicated command structure in the AOR, with deployed USCENTCOM operational forces, security assistance units, foreign military sales, and stovepipe organizations, all functioning in the same vicinity.⁸

In order to coordinate force protection for all assigned personnel in the it's area of responsibility (AOR), USCINCCENT OPORD 97-01 divides assigned personnel into three categories, Component Command Forces, Non-Component Command Forces, and Non-Component Command Forces under the Chiefs of Mission (COM). COMNAVCENT, as a Component Commander, is assigned the authority to *execute responsibility* for the force protection of all forces under his command. While the OPORD gives NAVCENT responsibility to set Terrorist Threat Conditions for assigned areas, CINCCENT maintains overall responsibility for force protection and for promulgating Terrorist Threat Levels. USCENTCOM Intelligence Directorate (CCJ2), in coordination with national and regional assets, is tasked with providing monthly Terrorist Threat Levels/Assessment Reviews, and publishing terrorism threat advisories and warnings as required. USCINCCENT OPORD 97-01 establishes the force protection organizational relationships, sets policy and procedures for proactive and reactive antiterrorism and defines terrorist threat levels and terrorist threat conditions. It contains specific land-based protective measures to be implemented for each Terrorist Threat Condition (THREATCON) including supplemental measures specific to the AOR, but does not delineate Shipboard THREATCON Measures.

The Joint Rear Area Coordinator (JRAC), stationed in theater, is given coordinating authority for force protection within the AOR and serves as a direct link for Component Commands and United States Defense Representatives (USDR) to CINCCENT on issues of force protection. The JRAC's responsibilities include assisting COMNAVCENT in

assessing force protection requirements for port visits, coordinating the vulnerability assessment program and monitoring threat levels and threat conditions throughout the AOR to identify and rationalize any disconnects between the two. The JRAC also reviews and coordinates all force protection plans for units deploying for exercises, contingency operations and port visits. The JRAC is co-located with and supported by elements of Joint Task Force Southwest Asia (JTF-SWA) in the AOR and has the direct support of CINCCENT in the United States (CONUS).⁹

COMUSNAVCENT/COMFIFTHFLT OPORD 99-01

COMUSNAVCENT/COMFIFTHFLT OPORD 99-01 is structured similarly and provides supplemental guidance to USCINCCENT OPORD 97-01. The OPORD establishes a Force Protection Board chaired by COMNAVCENT and designates the Fleet Marine Officer/Force Protection Officer (FMO/FPO) as the executive agent of the commander for force protection. The FMO/FPO is the principal advisor to the Commander and is tasked with supervising the force protection program and coordinating with outside agencies and the JRAC. In coordination with the JRAC and on the advice of his FMO/FPO, the Commander sets minimum Terrorist Threat Conditions. NAVCENT Intelligence (N2) "provides support to visiting USN elements with timely, accurate, and usable information pertaining to threats within the theater."¹⁰ The NAVCENT OPORD 99-01 delegates to Commander Task Force 50 (CTF 50) approval authority for force protection plans for port visits for assigned units. Although organized similarly to the CINCENT operation order, NAVCENT OPORD 99-01 includes the Shipboard THREATCON Measures promulgated in Joint Pub 3-07.2, but adds no supplemental measures specific to the region.

Policy Deficiencies and Disconnects

Through the analysis of the two governing operation orders, a comprehensive and thorough mechanism for force protection in the USCENTCOM AOR is evident, yet there are several deficiencies and areas of disconnect in and between the two documents.

USCINCENT OPORD 97-01 assigns NAVCENT the authority to “execute responsibility” for force protection of military personnel and for the establishment of terrorist threat conditions to COMNAVCENT. The misuse of the word responsibility in both operation orders causes confusion, as responsibility cannot be delegated, only authority. Some may argue that this discrepancy over the use of the word responsibility is trivial, but “words mean things.”¹¹ Confusion over force protection responsibility was seen in former CINCCENT Retired General Zinni’s response to questions asked by the Senate Armed Services Committee during its inquiry into the USS Cole incident. He said, “The force protection in the port is the responsibility of the Yemeni government.”¹² However, according to USCINCENT OPORD 97-01, CINCCENT maintains ultimate responsibility for force protection while NAVCENT is delegated authority to execute CINCCENT force protection policy for military units visiting Yemen. It also states “Do not assume force protection will automatically be provided by existing or host units at the site. Likewise, do not assume host nation will provide adequate security.”¹³

In the area of intelligence and counterintelligence, USCENTCOM OPORD 97-01 tasks the USCENTCOM Intelligence Directorate (CCJ2), located in Florida, through coordination with national agencies, the USCENTCOM staff and senior DOD representatives, to provide threat analysis and disseminate the Terrorist Threat Levels/Assessment Review throughout the AOR. The forward-deployed JRAC receives

intelligence support from the Joint Intelligence Support Element (JISE) which is supported by the National intelligence Support Team (NIST) deployed in support of JTF-SWA. An Intelligence Support Element (ISE), also located at USCENTCOM in Florida, acts as a coordinating activity between the JRAC, CCJ2, and the JISE. However, the Intelligence Directorate (N2) for COMUSNAVCENT is tasked by COMUSNAVCENT OPORD 99-01 to provide intelligence received through the US Embassy Bahrain (national level intelligence), the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) Field Office, USMC HUMINT Exploitation Team (HET) and other local and visiting intelligence elements. Liaison with CENTCOM J2, area Chiefs of Station (COS), Community Counter Terrorism Center (CCTC) and other national level agencies is directed "as needed". With a variety of geographically dispersed intelligence agencies providing intelligence support to different echelons of command within the AOR, the certainty that USCENTCOM bases its assignment of Terrorist Threat Levels on all available information becomes suspect.

Other Contributing Factors

Even with the noted deficiencies and disconnects in the areas of command control and intelligence, CINCCENT and COMNAVCENT had a comprehensive force protection organization, policy and procedure mechanisms established for the region. Further analysis of the conditions surrounding the attack on the USS Cole is therefore necessary to provide better insight into other deficiencies that exist with the maritime force protection mechanism. Areas to be covered include the trade off between the risks of terrorist attack and the benefits of engagement, intelligence, operational security, physical security and complacency.

Retired General Anthony Zinni told the Senate Armed Services Committee that he was responsible for deciding on Yemen as a refuel spot in 1998, saying that the Navy needed a refueling point near the geographically strategic choke-point, Bab el Mandeb, at the southern end of the Red Sea. Other available ports posed higher threats at the time, and Yemen was therefore the "least vulnerable option." He followed by saying "since then...it has improved, and we are not precluded from refueling in other places like Jidda or like Djibouti. It is that we have a contract in Aden."¹⁴ Since January 1999 terrorist threat levels have shifted. "For years, this review ("Patterns of Global Terrorism") has portrayed Yemen, not Djibouti or other Arabian Peninsula countries, as having multiple threats – including Palestinian, North African and domestic groups – residing outside government-controlled areas."¹⁵ Therefore, due to existing contracts and ongoing engagement activities, Yemen was the port used to refuel the USS Cole despite being analyzed as posing a high risk of terrorist attack.

Using the last of the four questions of operational art, the question raised is whether the benefits associated with conducting engagement with Yemen in the form of a Brief Stop for Fuel (BSF) outweighed the risk of potential terrorist attack. Officials including the previous and current CINCCENT have stated that at no time has requirement for engagement superceded the safety and protection of American military personnel. However, by eliminating all other options for refueling including other ports or refueling at sea as impractical or not viable, CINCCENT forced itself into a situation of accepting a high risk for the limited engagement benefit of refueling in Yemen.

In the area of intelligence, two different threat assessment systems were in effect for Yemen. "DOS information is published via the Composite Threat List, travel warnings, and

Consular Information Sheets.”¹⁶ Unlike the USCENTCOM Terrorist Threat Levels, the DOS assessments considered additional factors beyond terrorism including crime, coup, civil disorder and insurgency. The Department of State assessed the threat levels in Yemen to be significant enough to issue travel warnings and close the U. S. Embassy. In contrast, at least two warnings of attacks against U.S. forces were received well in advance of the attack on the USS Cole and determined by Pentagon analysts to be too vague. “Although published reports have said that the United States received vague intelligence reports about a possible attack against a U. S. warship ahead of the Cole bombing, Pentagon officials have emphasized they were not specific enough to issue a warning to American forces.”¹⁷ In fact, the day after the bombing occurred, a senior Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) terrorism expert resigned. “What he felt is that his assessment was not given that proper level of consideration by his superiors and, as such, was not incorporated in the final intelligence reports provided to military commanders in the Gulf.”¹⁸ Therefore, due to discrepancies in the analysis and dissemination of intelligence at the national level, CINCENT and ultimately the USS Cole made decisions based on incomplete information.

“Operations security (OPSEC) is used to deny information to the enemy about one’s own capabilities and intentions until it is too late for the enemy to react.”¹⁹ Current peacetime requirements for obtaining diplomatic clearance, arranging contractor support and obtaining harbor pilot and port security support severely hamper OPSEC. “Three days before suicide bombers attacked the USS Cole, American authorities told Aden harbor officials precisely when the ship would arrive and leave the port, where it would berth, and what services it needed – information that could have helped the bombers plan their strike.”²⁰ Another factor detrimental to OPSEC is that, as seen in the many articles published since the USS Cole

incident, Shipboard THREATCON Measures are unclassified and therefore could be accessed by terrorists through the internet. In a port such as Aden with marginal to nonexistent operational security of its own, terrorists would have had ample time to plan and even rehearse specific tactics if they in fact had the above information. Some officials have argued that the advance notice was irrelevant as the attack conducted on the Cole took months of planning and simple observation of the harbor provided necessary notice to the terrorist of their target's arrival. They also rightly argue that advance notification and diplomatic clearance are inescapable requirements. However, in the interest of increasing operational security, the mechanism associated with arranging port visits needs revision to reduce availability of important information to terrorists.

Investigations into the circumstances surrounding the Cole incident verify that the USS Cole followed established procedures for force protection by submitting and obtaining approval for an in-port force protection plan and enacting appropriate Shipboard THREATCON Measures for NAVCENT established THREATCON 'Bravo.' Even though some procedures were neglected, the Captain of the USS Cole was exonerated. "Despite the findings, however, the officials emphasized that it was not clear that the attack would have been averted if the Cole's crew had followed its own security procedures to the letter."²¹ This raises the question of whether established THREATCON protective measures adequately provide the necessary physical security for assigned threat levels.

One of the first exercises conducted with the Red Cell in 1984 was exactly the scenario that was conducted by the terrorists against the USS Cole. We found out with the Red Cell, barring any human intelligence capability, that the only way to defeat such an attack was to utilize harbor security craft with highly trained, armed personnel onboard.²²

During THREATCON 'Bravo,' the USS Cole was only required to have a patrol boat crew in 15 minute alert. Also, as addressed earlier, many incorrectly assumed that the responsibility for force protection belonged to the host nation. "...a Yemeni official asserted that there is no security agreement between Sanaa and Washington that commits Yemeni authorities to protect US vessels when they enter the ports to get fuel supplies."²³ The USS Cole was therefore in a physical security posture inadequate to defeat the threat posed by the terrorists and had no security support from the host nation. This analysis was confirmed by the findings of both the Gehman-Crouch and the Judge Advocate General Manual (JAGMAN) investigations.

The issue of complacency surfaces throughout the above analysis. After initial vulnerability assessments of the port of Aden in 1998, General Zinni, then CINCCENT, tasked NAVCENT and the Defense Energy Support Center, a branch of the Defense Logistic Agency with securing the fueling contract. Between then and the Cole incident, 27 ships had refueled in the port of Aden without incident. "In January 1999, threat levels for Aden changed from medium to high and remain so to date. Therefore, "high threat" levels became business as usual over time."²⁴ In spite of the increased threat levels, the requirement for armed U.S. security patrol boats used during the initial port visits was cancelled. Even though General Zinni chose Aden as a refueling port due to other ports being higher risk, no effort was made in the subsequent two years to change contracts when threat levels shifted and Yemen became higher threat than other area ports. Although the US embassy was closed and travel warnings disseminated by the U.S. Embassy in Yemen, this information was not forwarded to the USS Cole, and other warnings of possible attack were dismissed by DIA officials as too vague and hence never forwarded to CINCCENT. U.S. operations in the port

of Aden became predictable due to this complacency. Terrorists had more than sufficient time to plan the attack as they only narrowly missed accomplishing a similar attack against the USS Sullivans earlier the same year. "The overarching theme is we've done a lot of things to improve force protection, but it is still not deeply rooted in our culture."²⁵ This quote from a senior defense official after reading the results of the Gehman-Crouch Cole Commission Report summarizes the effect of complacency on the maritime force protection issue.

Recommendations

Analysis of the terrorist attack on the USS Cole and the established force protection organization, policies and procedures have revealed four areas where recommendations based on select principles of war can improve maritime force protection for the Theater CINC. 1. A recommendation to improve Intelligence and Command and Control will be based on the principles of unity of effort and simplicity. 2. Alternatives to refueling in a high threat port will be based on the principle of surprise and also address the risk to benefit tradeoff of the four questions of operational art. 3. The principle of security will be used to recommend changes to the current THREATCON system. 4. The recommendation for improving in-port physical security will apply the principle of mass.

Intelligence

The assessment of terrorist intelligence and counter intelligence for the dissemination of Terrorist Threat Levels is the responsibility of CINCCENT and therefore must be

accomplished at his level. All national and other agency intelligence sources, including those previously supporting Component Commands, must provide all information concerning terrorist threats within the AOR to the CINC Intelligence Directorate to enable the CINC to base assessments on the most current and thorough information available. DOS and the CINC must unify their intelligence efforts to generate a single Terrorist Threat Level assessment for the AOR that is promulgated by the CINC. This unity of effort between various intelligence agencies would eliminate confusion.

Some may argue that making CINC J2 the supported element and all other agencies the supporting elements is not only too difficult, but "steps on too many toes." Although this may be true, CINC J2 and the JRAC already coordinate with the various agencies for intelligence support. The only difference this recommendation requires is that supporting agencies like the DIA not eliminate through their own assessment terrorist threat information that would allow the CINC to provide an accurate, fully informed Terrorist Threat Level assessment. With the increased information being provided to the CINC J2, he/she would necessarily need to enlist the help of other agency personnel, national and DOD, to analyze and assess the information. Having the CINC provide the sole Terrorist Threat Level Assessment for the entire AOR simplifies the establishment of Terrorist Threat Conditions by Component Commanders and United States Defense Representatives.

Risk

By limiting the available refueling options in that region of his AOR to one, CINCCENT was forced to accept the risk of terrorist attack for the limited engagement

benefit of supporting a fueling contract. Other factors limiting the options of the CINC were the Navy's policies to refuel ships with no lower than fifty percent fuel remaining, and to not provide oilers to individual ships. Instituting similar contracts with other regional ports like Djibouti and Jidda, and tasking NAVCENT with making an oiler available would allow the CINC to decrease the terrorist threat by using the principle of surprise. The ability to send ships to one of three or more ports for fuel or to have them refuel at sea would drastically decrease their predictability and therefore keep terrorists guessing.

Three arguments against these two recommendations immediately arise. The establishment of contracts with two or more additional ports would involve a tremendous expenditure of money. Yemeni officials could interpret the U.S. diverting of ships to other ports as retreating from its engagement commitment. Also, refueling at sea would not only detract from engagement, it would put too much of a strain on the limited number of remaining oilers after the recent downsizing of the Navy. In rebuttal to these arguments, the cost of transporting and rebuilding an incapacitated warship could negate the added contracting costs associated with having more ports available. Also, the minimal benefits associated with refueling as an engagement activity at a high threat port do not warrant the risks. A better form of engagement would be the training of port security personnel in the area of force protection by small U.S. training teams. Though limited in number and heavily tasked, providing an oiler for the underway refueling of an individual warship to avoid exposing the ship to a high threat port visit is justifiable. The possible inconveniences and delays caused to other ships in the area would be minimal compared to the possible consequences of a successful terrorist attack.

Security

Peacetime engagement in a high terrorist threat AOR has been and will continue to be the rule rather than the exception for US forces deployed overseas. By utilizing all resources available, using the principle of mass, the CINC can reduce risk to assigned units while continuing effective engagement activities. Prior to establishing a fueling contract for engagement, the CINC provide the personnel and equipment necessary to train host nation security personnel. As was done with the de-mining of Yemeni coastal waters, the CINC could provide teams of security experts from U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S Coast Guard and other military components to train and organize host nation security personnel. Intelligence and Law Enforcement experts could also be provided to train host nation counterparts on effective organization, tactics, techniques, procedures and equipment. This would boost national self-reliance and prove to be a better engagement practice than purchasing fuel. It would also serve to reduce the threat of terrorism and improve the possibility of follow-on engagement activities.

Mass

The USS Cole was in a High Terrorist Threat Level port, yet with approved protective measures established, it had no perimeter security. Even in THREATCON 'Normal,' the lowest Terrorist Threat Level, personnel man entry-control points at bases throughout the United States providing perimeter security. The Cole Commission Report recommended that the

Secretary of Defense direct the CINCs and services to give Component Commanders the responsibility and resources to direct tailored protection measures to be implemented at specific sites for in-transit units...and the particular measures that are triggered by a specific THREATCON be classified.²⁶

These measures must include putting armed, trained personnel in patrol boats to establish a perimeter through which approaching boats must pass. In agreement with the Cole Commission, protective measures should also be classified to increase operational security. In response to the possible question of where ships are to obtain these trained security personnel, the answer is from within their commands. U.S. Military personnel are accustomed to being multitasked and having multiple areas of expertise. Perimeter security personnel would be trained during the Inter-Deployment Training Cycle (IDTC) prior to deployment. Unannounced Exercises with Red Cell personnel simulating terrorist attacks against units during IDTC would serve greatly to increase situational awareness and test preparedness.

Conclusion

Using the terrorist attack on the USS Cole and subsequent investigations as an illustrative example, this paper analyzed the FP/AT organization, policies and procedures for the CINCCENT and NAVCENT. Discrepancies in the areas of intelligence and command and control were identified in the two echelons' operation orders. The decision to refuel the USS Cole in Aden, Yemen, viewed as peacetime engagement, was scrutinized based on fourth question of operational art. Other contributing factors of intelligence, operations security, physical security and complacency were also addressed. Recommendations were offered for improvements in maritime force protection against terrorist threats during peacetime. The Theater CINC can improve force protection for inport maritime vessels by applying select principles of war and the four questions of operational art to maritime force protection and peacetime engagement policies.

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